

WILLIAM A. LITTLE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
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FORMER STATE LEGISLATOR

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INTERVIEWERS: WILLIAM LITTLE

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[00:00:00] **MICHAEL ROSS:** In 1969 I was working as a trainer for a non-profit organization called Western Action Training Corporation. It was a non-profit foundation that had a contract with the Office of Economic Opportunity to provide training for community action programs throughout the state of Washington, for the entire West Coast. We had a Washington office, Washington, Oregon and Alaska office up here. During that period I had been involved in what euphemistically is called street action, or the politics of the street. I had inadvertently in May 26, the latter part of May, ended up leading the demonstration at Seattle Community College's Central Campus that ended up shutting down the entire school and later on erupted into a major pitched battle between the police and the residents of the Central Area. During that period of time, I was on a paid leave of absence or on a loan executive basis to Central Area Co-op. We were trying to save that during that period of time, that summer. It was having financial trouble due to poor management of the organizers of the Co-op. Also, during that time, the nucleus of what was called the Central Contractors Association was

starting to come together. The Model Cities Program earlier that year had several task force meetings in their physical planning committee, where they invited in minority contractors, and they had a series of discussions. Now initially, the Model Cities staff thought that the major problem that minority contractors had was the whole problem of performance bonding. You've got to have a track record, you have to have a financial statement, a strong financial statement, in order to get a performance bond. The performance bond is a requirement to work on all public works jobs. What really came out in those discussions was the need for the contractors to become organized amongst themselves, and involved in professional organizations. Tyree Scott, who then was, I guess, Vice President of Scott's Electric, which was owned by his father, kind of came to my attention. He began to assume a leadership role and pretty much carry the ball, in terms of other contractors, in putting together a thing called the Central Contractors Association.

I was, as an individual and a social activist, concerned with that kind group getting together. A series of meetings, during the summer in about a couple of months, either June or July, that the group had formed itself. So in that summer of 1969, the group was—An issue came to the group's attention which was where one of the contractors had talked to a contractor who had just received a bid, a contract award, to do a sewer project, sewer separation project over on Queen Anne Hill for the City of Seattle. So one of the contractors there went to that contractor and asked about getting some work, and questioned whether or not the guy had an Affirmative Action program or made any efforts. The guy's response was "No," that he had signed all the papers, et cetera. We got the name of Lem Howell as an attorney. He was retained by one of the members, I forget who it was, to look at the possibility of legal redress. So complaints were filed with the city, and the city in effect informed Lem Howell and the Central Contractors Association that, as far as they were concerned, the little Affirmative Action statements that were signed by anybody receiving a construction contract from the City of Seattle, that that was just a mere formality, and that they had no responsibility to make sure that the firm receiving a public works contract did indeed employ minority subcontractors and employ minority workers. So this upset a lot of people. There was a series of several meetings. It was decided that if not only minority contractors and minority construction workers couldn't be employed, or in the building in the city, and specifically at this time the construction activity that was going on in the Central Area, that Model Cities dollars provided for that activity, such as proposed Odessa Brown Clinic, the Cultural Center, the rehabilitation of that, which was a Jewish synagogue before it became a cultural center, the building of mini parks, and the Medgar Evers Swimming Pool. An outstanding example of the problems they foresaw was that they didn't feel that the Medgar Evers Swimming Pool, which was a million dollar project, didn't have enough minority employees on it, and they were also upset because there weren't enough minority subcontractors. So the decision was made to shut down, some time in late June, the work on the Medgar Evers Pool. That was the first in a series of demonstrations and closures of construction projects.

[00:06:55] **WILLIAM:** So that wasn't really a spontaneous thing, that was a planned out kind of strategy as opposed to a spontaneous type of thing?

[00:07:02] **MICHAEL:** Yeah, right. Now, specifically my role, at least at that point in time, really was with other people who had been involved in the politics of the street, Larry Gossett, Carl Miller. I was involved in it. I persuaded—I talked to Larry Gossett and Carl Miller and other people who had been involved in the direct action, social action, of a variety of issues, to get involved with the Central Contractors. The role that I played essentially was one of, to a certain extent, strategist and organizer along with Larry Gossett, Carl Miller, and guys like Billy Jackson. All three of these people had been involved, were actively involved, at that time, with the Black Student Union. Before that, they'd been involved with the Black Panther Party, or the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, SNCC. So we had had the experience in terms of direct action, and we had the experience in organizing for direct action. Within a very short period of time, within a month, the focus was switched from contracts for minority contractors as a primary issue, and employment of minorities in the

construction industry as a secondary issue—It was reversed. The focus then became one of general employment in the construction industry.

Also, at this point in time, Lem Howell filed a lawsuit in the federal court, and the judge who was hearing the case was Judge Lindberg. Later on in the Spring of 1970, that lawsuit was won, and the court issued an order requiring the labor unions to bring in so many minority apprentices. Now, what occurred during those first few months was that the minorities who were involved, both the Central Contractors and ourselves, realized that the real resistance to any changes, meaning minority participation in the construction industry, not only on the employee level but as private entrepreneur level, that the big obstacle was the labor unions, who had a very dominant position in the construction industry, more dominant than that in other industries. So that was where the focus of the struggle was going on.

Ask questions.

[00:10:15] **WILLIAM:** Ok. One thing that bothered me was that, in between the time the CCA [Central Contractors Association] was focusing on the interests of the contractors and the time when they began to, when the UCWA [United Construction Workers Association] emerged wasn't there—The time frame between—The period between—

[00:10:39] **MICHAEL:** Yeah. I was going to say that in the Spring of 1970, the United Construction Workers was formed. This resulted from several things. One, a leadership struggle that occurred in December within the Central Contractors Association involving Tyree Scott, where some of the membership felt that—They were questioning his leadership and there was rivalry for the leadership, and Tyree was subsequently beaten up by some of the members of the Central Contractors. As a result of that, Tyree felt that his leadership was no longer needed, and he withdrew even though later on they changed their minds, about January or February of 1970, and asked him to return to previous leadership role as President of the CCA. Tyree did not feel that way, that he ought to go back. In a series of discussions with myself, I was advocating very early on that by early Fall 1969 we were shutting down major construction projects, that what was needed in terms of the community was a minority industrial construction union so that we could compete with this lily-white union that refused to let us in. At that time the court decision had not been rendered, and there were some discussions that Tyree and I had. There was obviously a need for a minority construction employee organization because our efforts had been somewhat successful or significantly successful by the Fall of 1969.

So in the early Spring of 1970, the American Friends Service Committee had supported the efforts of the Central Contractors, and were interested in offering the assistance of the Service Committee and volunteer staff. Which was when, I forget if she was volunteering or a staff person, I think her name was Alice Pain, came to me after talking to Tyree, and discussed what needed to be done in terms of the minority community in the construction industry. In that process, what came out was minority employees' unions or associations. My position at the time was that we should have union status, strive for that, and come on the road were Teamsters and United Auto Workers so that you'd have some competing labor clout to deal with the Seattle King County Building Trades Council. So she asked me if I would be willing, this Friends Service Committee would put together some bucks to organize such a group. I told her no, because at the time I had just begun an experimental housing project, and I had another six or seven months to go before that was completed. So I suggested that Tyree would be the most logical person other than myself to do it, and she said that she asked Tyree and he had said no. I said "Go back and talk to him," and that I would try to persuade him. We were both successful, and that's how the United Construction Workers got started.

When the court suit came in, there was a definite role for the United Construction Workers Union.

[00:14:34] **WILLIAM:** Ok, give me a second. I need to—I don't want to bypass a lot.

[00:14:41] **MICHAEL:** You ask the questions. I'm just kind of talking and trying to get out as much information as I can recall.

[00:14:49] **WILLIAM:** Ok. Let's go back to the shutdown of the university and the airport. What kind of strategy did you plan—How was the strategy planned to deal with them two social actions? I should ask the question, what process did you and the group organize and go through in developing that kind of procedure to implement that kind of strategy?

[00:15:34] **MICHAEL:** For instance, the targets that were picked were targets that, one, were based upon the feasibility of being able to shut them down, getting [inaudible] . So that's why we picked the Odessa Brown Clinic, being in our own community. Secondly, we picked projects that were funded by the government because of their definite responsibility for equal opportunity. The second thing we had was that the targets were being picked based upon the size of the contract and the impact that would occur in terms of shutting those projects down. The third criterion was being able to shut down those projects successfully, and keep them shut, and getting concessions out of whatever entity was responsible for the projects. Like the Medgar Evers project was a city project, and we tried to get concessions out of the city. We got some concessions. We shut down the King County Courthouse annex project, and we got concessions out of King County as a consequence, in that they would force the contractor to put on minority construction trainees, jobs. We then picked the University of Washington because it had a sizable capital construction program going on, and again it was a quasi-governmental body, two, we felt that the student body and faculty, that a number of people would be sympathetic to the cause. Again, as a consequence, they put on minority trainees on those two jobs.

The Airport—You know we hit the Airport at about late October, and we hit that as a process, we had shut down most of the major public works projects in the City of Seattle, and we felt that we could escalate by going toward the biggest public works projects then in the city, which is the billion to half a billion dollar project to expand the City of Seattle. Secondly, we had a problem with the people that were supporting us because there was physical attrition due to clashes with the police department. And so, when we started jobs we looked at the— Take the airport project. We said we could move out of the City of Seattle, and that I knew that, at that time, the King County Sheriff's Department, or King County Department Of Public Safety only had approximately 250 public safety deputies, and this was spread over three watches. There was no way possible for the King County Sheriff's Department to handle us out at the Airport, even in conjunction with the airport police officers, which were no more than about, for the whole Port, maybe 20 or 30, again, over three shifts. We also understood that there was a physical problem in that the construction was spread over five acres, and there was no way that we could physically shut down five acres of construction projects. So, at my suggestion, in terms of strategy, we talked to the Port people and they turned us down, and we in effect gave the impression that we were leaving because we had lost. Then we went out on the flight line because that was a weak point, and we knew that the Port authority would shut down the projects because, one, they could ill afford to have someone killed if they weren't feeling humanitarian, as humanitarians feeling a humanitarian impulse, but, mainly, we knew that they couldn't afford to have one or more demonstrators get caught in a half-million dollar jet engine, and maybe have it blow up. Or they couldn't afford to have some JP fuel blow up, and they couldn't afford to have some airplanes crash because they ran into some demonstrators. We knew it was just a matter of time, and after ten planes kept circling up there, burning up that fuel, and another ten that were sitting on the ground, and a thousand people watching the whole event, that the Port Authority had to shut down the projects. The other thing that we knew that, because of the JP fuel, jet fuel, JP4, that the handful of King County policemen, I think they sent out about 20 of them, that they could not remove several hundred demonstrators because one, they couldn't use the tear gas guns cause it would blow everybody up, and two, they couldn't use

their weapons. So we had a nonviolent situation. We in effect told them that if they didn't get back in their cars we were going to whip their ass, and they got back into their cars. That was the kind of strategy we had.

[00:20:40] **WILLIAM:** Ok. Let's get back to once you got elected to office. That was in 1970. From 1970 to 1971, was there many or were there any demonstrations during that period of time?

[00:21:13] **MICHAEL:** Yes. They were very small demonstrations involved around, usually, problems on a specific construction project, where the United Construction Workers would take maybe 60 or 70 people and shut down a project because of the treatment that was being received by apprentices, Black and minority apprentices, on the job. As an example, a job was shut down at Group Health in 1971 because the court order forced the plumber's unions to take in several minority apprentices. They were dispatched out to the job, and the superintendent who was running the job had the guy just clean out a shack and wouldn't allow him to work. The reason given was that the rest of the plumbers that if the Black son-of-a-bitch works on the job, they were going to walk off. So the United Construction Workers first just had to take a group, this was the construction of the Group Health Hospital annex. They sat down in private, and they told the white plumbers that if he can't work, y'all can't work. Finally there was a resolution that he was put to work. That was really a kind of housekeeping thing, in terms of enforcing the court order that existed.

In 1972, the unions became rather blatant in terms of resisting and circumventing the court order. and, as far as the UCWA was concerned, they were not in compliance with the court order. Legal motions and petitions were placed before the court, Lindberg refused to act in terms of declaring Austin St. Laurent and other leaders of the construction union in contempt of court, fining them, and/or throwing them into jail. So, as a state legislator, I and Tyree Scott and other people, we decided that, again, if the unions couldn't obey the law and minority apprentices who were in the unions and on the jobs, who were to supposed to be on the jobs and being trained in accordance with the case handed down by Lindberg, that they ought naught to work. So a series of demonstrations started again with the shutting down of the highway work out in Issaquah, I-90, the Factoria Exchange, some other stuff. Again, we shut down Seattle Community College, and reached two days at Seattle Community College. The first day that we shut that down, Tyree was not there. I ended up assuming the leadership. There was a pitched battle between the minorities and the hard hats, the white hard hats, who were being egged on by Austin St. Laurent, who was Executive Secretary of the Building Trades Union, and some of the business agents of the various unions involved. I think 10 to 15 people were either hospitalized or had to receive medical care as a result of the injuries sustained in the battle that occurred on the third floor next to the union building. Then the second day, there was a battle that occurred between the Seattle Police Department attack squad, which again, several people had to be treated for injuries, including a couple of police officers. And again, I participated in that as a state legislator, an elected official.

First of all, I think the thing that I haven't stated but that we've got to assume, is that the Black community's opinion and support is not monolithic. If there was any unanimity in terms of individual opinion or personal support of shutting down construction projects, it was there because what it represented to almost every Black person at some point in time—whether he was in college or got out of high school, or got out of college, or didn't finish college—he looked at the possibility of going into a trade, and he couldn't get in because of blatant discrimination on the part of the building trades unions. So there was somebody in somebody's family who had been turned down for summer employment or for employment as apprentices in the various trades by the white unions. So everybody was sympathetic. Those who hadn't even been turned down or had the contact were sympathetic in terms of having the desire for their son or somebody in their family to be able to become an electrician, to be able to become a plumber, and to draw those high salaries in lieu of them going to college, for instance. Another thing that they were sympathetic about was that the fact that historically Blacks in the South had been builders of office building and residential homes, and they understood the importance of minority

contractors being able to get contracts and employing minorities, and taking that money and depositing it in our Liberty Bank, and spending that money within our community. So if there was a unanimous issue, that was it.

There was some question in terms of some of the middle class community about tactics. For some of them it was kind of frightening that we had enough nerve to shut down the Seattle-Tacoma Airport, thirty miles away from the Black community. It was also frightening to them that at times there were small battles involving construction hard hats, white construction workers, and demonstrators. After a while their criticism just kind of quieted down because it finally hit them that the construction worker is not a college professor, nor a mid-management decision-maker, he's a guy who is very physical in his responses to situations. Another reason why some of the middle class leadership was critical was because the unions are a major political force in the City of Seattle and the State of Washington, and pressure was being brought on certain of the programs vis a-vis the elected officials who owed their election to the labor unions. By and large, it was one issue that was unanimity in the Black community in terms of support.

One other thing that was unique in that struggle was that was the first time that the Asian community had joined with the Black community in dealing with an issue of discrimination and entering in with the Black community on a direct action basis of shutting down construction projects.

[00:29:00] **WILLIAM:** This was 1970?

[00:29:02] **MICHAEL:** This was in 1969. That group was then led by Mineo Katagiri, or he had been a part of it, and Dr. [? Joel ?] Kimoto, and it was a group called ACE [Asian Coalition for Equality], Asian Coalition for Equality, and that was an Asian group made up of Philipinos, Japanese, and Chinese. They supported the efforts of the Central Contractors, they were part of the demonstrations, they went to jail like everybody else did, and that was a significant thing that occurred in terms of the minority community.

[00:29:40] **WILLIAM:** So this was a multi-ethnic type of effort?

[00:29:42] **MICHAEL:** Yes. The big thrust certainly came from the Black community, being the largest minority community. The Central Contractors to this day have a multi-ethnic board. They have an Asian—An Asian has always been on the Board. In fact, an Asian is on the Board of Directors of the National Minority Contractors Association. That's something, in terms when we talk about leadership, that's something that occurred and was fostered and encouraged by Tyree Scott, myself, Larry Gossett, and Carl Miller. So finally—And also, there were white activists that participated as the year went along, so it was a multi-ethnic effort. The white activists didn't get involved until later on, in about November of that year, after the whole struggle had gone on for about three or four months.

In 1972, which was kind of a culmination of the whole struggle, at least on the employment side—

[BREAK IN RECORDING OF INTERVIEW]

I'll tell you that both Tyree and I, even though the leadership or the main thrust came from the Black community, it had multi-ethnic support and participation. In 1972 it was even more multi-ethnic because it was not only Asians, but Chicanos involved in the struggle, plus women's groups, plus other white groups, some of the individuals so-called white radicals. So those were the groups that supported us and engaged in direct action. I would probably say that that is probably what has made—You talk about leadership in a given issue in the struggle, the strategy and the input, and to some extent the philosophical tone was set by Tyree and myself. That's what probably makes us unique in terms of some people labelling us so-called Black leaders, that we did believe in a Third World struggle, and at the same time we believe in each type of community determining what

its priorities are and who it's going to coalesce with. We in turn have on other issues supported other ethnic groups. Indians were even involved in 1972, the Indian community also supported us.

[00:32:25] **WILLIAM:** What was the reaction to the predominant leadership over the time? In terms of leadership, initially when you go back to '69, the whole Black community was very supportive, in terms of the leadership, in terms of everybody—McKinney went down there and demonstrated that day at Bothell [inaudible], and then in 1973 and '74 you began to get less support from the leadership of the Black community, in terms of conservative leadership—

[00:32:56] **MICHAEL:** I think what happened there was the process of, to some extent Tyree and myself, not being satisfied with what we perceived to be great gains made and really escalating into some other areas

[00:33:15] **WILLIAM:** Such as?

[00:33:15] **MICHAEL:** Such as politics. Who makes the decisions? For instance, Tyree and I opposed the nomination, the installation of Dick Ford, who is the Deputy Director of the Seattle Port Authority, and that's the first time that the Black community and minority community interjected itself in the whole nominating/hiring process. Dick Ford was nominated to become the Superintendent of City Light, and Tyree and I vigorously lobbied against that appointment, and some strange forces came to bear. Austin St. Laurent, who had been a very obstinate enemy of Affirmative Action and minority inclusion into the building trades unions, agreed with us. So the old saying, "politics makes strange bedfellows," that occurred in that situation, to the extent where Dick Ford withdrew his name from nomination as Superintendent. We focused on Dick Ford because we felt that here was a guy that had not done a good job in terms of employment of minorities at the Seattle Port Authority, where he was legal counsel. So one of the few times in the City of Seattle minorities had a significant part in denying a very powerful man something that he desired. The message was not lost on other people who are ambitious, who want to be in powerful public positions. Now, in that case, a number of established Black leadership opposed, did not support that effort, because they felt that Dick Ford had talked to them, Dick Ford had made some strides, et cetera, and that something had been done. Well, Tyree and I had dealt with the man negotiating with him over the issue of minority contractors getting contracts in the big expansion program going on at the Airport, and in employment of minorities at all levels. Now after Mr. Ford went back to the Port Authority and was put into a more powerful position as Deputy Director of the Port, he has paid consistent and rather detailed attention to the Port's affirmative action program. So we've—Tyree and I broke ranks with the leadership over that issue. For instance, the Urban League supported his nomination, and was very upset because Tyree and I opposed it.

[00:36:13] **WILLIAM:** Ok. What was the consequence of that type of action in terms of the community itself?

[00:36:20] **MICHAEL:** Most of the community probably didn't realize the consequences.

[00:36:25] **WILLIAM:** I should say the leadership, because I'm not concerned with—

[00:36:28] **MICHAEL:** Well, first of all, they were quite amazed that Dick Ford withdrew and did not get appointed as Superintendent, because nobody could relate to any case where the minority community had any part to play in such an appointment to a very position.

[00:36:40] **WILLIAM:** So that was the first type of direct action within the political arena by a Black?

[00:36:48] **MICHAEL:** Right. Well, by not just any Black, but some Blacks moving on a political level, a so-called traditional political level that in the past had been pretty much reserved to majority players.

[00:37:05] **WILLIAM:** What I'm trying to get at is that there had to be some kind of reaction within the Black community.

[00:37:10] **MICHAEL:** What Black community? By the community?

[00:37:12] **WILLIAM:** No, by the community leaders.

[00:37:14] **MICHAEL:** The reaction was one, some of them went for Dick Ford, some of them just stood back and said, "This is not our fight. That if the man is going to do downtown what he wants, the man wants him, therefore it's going to go."

[00:37:27] **WILLIAM:** What I'm trying to get at is that, in terms of your election, re-election campaign, that certain forces in the Black community, although Tyree Scott and Harley Bird got out and doorbelled and supported you fully, just didn't support you, by and large. There had to have been some—

[00:37:44] **MICHAEL:** That was only— The only Black group that didn't support me during my time for re-election to that post, was really a group of so-called established Black leaders. The masses, they don't represent that many votes, at least they couldn't translate that into the ballot box, their concern and maybe negative feelings about me as an individual, and maybe also carrying over to Tyree. It just didn't happen. 95% of the Black people who went out to vote voted for me.

[00:38:23] **WILLIAM:** Yeah, but the effect they had was not only on Blacks but on white liberals.

[00:38:29] **MICHAEL:** Some white liberals— There was slippage with them in terms of ballot box support. I only got their vote to the tune of about 60-65%. In 1970, I got about 80% of their vote. The white liberals were very upset with me because they felt it was all right to be committed—

[00:38:49] **WILLIAM:** But not that committed.

[00:38:50] **MICHAEL:** Not that committed, that's right.

[00:38:51] **WILLIAM:** So what the problem is, what you have here is the two groups: a Black sort of established conservative, and white liberals, which pulled together, which really made a significant support in which had supported you in the past—

[00:39:09] **MICHAEL:** But even that wasn't enough in terms of what you call overwhelming support, like say 65% of all the people that I had represented for two years, voting for me and making it as high as 70%. My problem came with redistricting in terms of 40% of the district was new and 40% of that district was Democratic, and 40% of it was the people, or 65% of them who were voting or as even as high as 80%, were in the Rainier Valley, they were older whites who came from blue collar families, small business types, and they were just very upset with me. It was a change in the district.

[00:39:55] **WILLIAM:** Ok. The change in the district contributed to your losing?

[00:39:59] **MICHAEL:** Yes. I lost between 8 and 10% of the vote, and that 8-10% of the vote was overwhelming came against me was in the Rainier Valley, the new portion of the district.

[00:40:13] **WILLIAM:** So it wasn't really that significant in terms of the Black community withdrawing support?

[00:40:19] **MICHAEL:** No. The Black community supported me fully. In terms of where Black people live, again, I probably got anywhere from 85 to 95% of the Black vote.

[00:40:29] **WILLIAM:** Ok. Because I was thinking in terms of the type of articulation, the types of things that were being said at that particular time that you did command a sizable block of votes?

[00:40:43] **MICHAEL:** No, they couldn't do it at the ballot box because, maybe if one of them had opposed me they might have made this persuasive, but my opponent was a young Asian by the name of John Eng, who they didn't know of and who hadn't shown them a damn thing in terms of his being even remotely interested in the problems of Black people. So maybe even if they had reservations, they didn't show up in the ballot box because there were no alternatives.

[00:41:13] **WILLIAM:** Ok. I'm trying to figure that out anyway, but I guess it wasn't [inaudible]

[00:41:19] **MICHAEL:** Now it may be one of those things where this middle class group did have an impact is that, if the Black voter turnout had been greater, by 10 or 15%, then I probably would have gotten re-elected. But because of their lack of support for me, in the normal case if I had been one of them, they would have taken all their resources to get out the vote. That probably could have increased the voter turnout in the Black population by about 10 or 15%, which might have gotten me re-elected.

[00:41:48] **WILLIAM:** Ok. Well that still was something. They did withdraw resources, and not they just grew cold because you wasn't articulating their particular position.

[00:42:01] **MICHAEL:** That's the strange part about it is that not all the Black community, but a small group, at times I had articulated their positions. At times I had gone to bat for issues that they were concerned about. Probably their concern was really, my particular style, plus some feelings of insecurity about—I think they perceived my growing influence in relationship to what they perceived to be the parameters of their influence.

[00:42:34] **WILLIAM:** Of their involvement. Well, I figure let's talk about that. In terms of parameters of their influence, I would say it's divided, but I think that's a key factor. I mean I think that's a key concept in terms of the parameters of their influence. Let's talk about that. How broad is the Black leadership influence anyway in terms of state government, in terms of local government?

[00:42:58] **MICHAEL:** Ok. That was where I think I threatened them, in terms of the parameters of influence and leadership, is that they weren't too concerned, at times concerned when say, the younger Black guys about my age were critical of their leadership, and opposed maybe their positions on certain issues affecting the Black community, and maybe opposed some of their motives. I don't think they were too upset with both Tyree and I, as long as we stayed within the realm of the struggle of the street.

[00:43:35] **WILLIAM:** One would say the realm of nigger politics. But once you move out—

[00:43:39] **MICHAEL:** Ok, and by my getting elected, what occurred was several things— They themselves are not ballot box politicians. They are very good at brokering white support. They are very good at bureaucratic politics, of dealing with bureaucrats. They developed a lot of skill through the poverty programs, doing that, not only the federal officials, but state, federal bureaucrats, but state bureaucrats and local bureaucrats. When I got elected, my style being very aggressive and getting into some areas that normally, as an elected official, one

wouldn't be too concerned about. For instance as a legislator, I did not serve on the Social and Health Services Committee, which handles welfare. I did serve on the Appropriations Committee, because the issue when I got elected with the Boeing Depression was money. There weren't going to be any new programs. So I served on Appropriations, which handled more than just the social agency budgets, but a whole bunch of budgets. I also served on the Judiciary Committee, that deals with fundamental changes in state law, both civil and criminal, where the City of Seattle in the County of King, if they wanted some statutory changes to allow them to get into new taxing areas or allow them to do things differently in terms of how they administered and ran local government, or gained any additional authorities,— it had to come through the Judiciary Committee. And probably one committee that no one expected that I would be on, and very few people in my community realized I was on, is on the Financial Institutions Committee, which had jurisdiction over all insurance companies and all lending institutions, such as all the commercial banks, mutual savings banks, savings and loans associations, and small loan companies. That accessed me into contact with some very powerful people.